Jim and Dave, re "King" on NBC, Mann, Lane and the FBI 2/11/78

I have just read the Shales review in today's Post.

Several days ago I taped a Mann promotions appearance on "Today."

Because the local electronics shop has not yet completed installing my system for taping from TV I'd have to do it by keeping entirely quite during all those hours and neiter my phone nor I can do that.

Earlier Isuggested to Dave that he ask NBC for the script for his archive and any other relevant records they would care to deposit.

Adding the content of the Shales review to what I heard Mann say I believe that the archive requeires both a tape and the script.

So I hope he will ask for it. Now.

I am reminded of a surprised line George Lardner once pulled on me, almost an astonished accusation, "You're defending the FBI."

I guess truth is a stranger.

But in this case I'm really wondering about asking for fairness doctrine time to address the Memphis part of this series of shows. I'm now inclined to favor it, regardless of the intrusion into the little time we have.

This will be another distortion of history that will reach an extaordinarily large audience.

My belief is that when the show is aired plagiarism, real plagiarism, not just taking the idea, will be an important part of it as it is in the Shales review. It may be the point at which to start trying to do something about this. NBC and Mann were both on notice long before they shot the film. NBC's answers would demean a Philadelphia lawyer, as Jim may remember.

So I think you should look at this part carefully and if possible each of you tape that part for reviewing it later, as I'll try to do with an air tape, a recorder near the TV set.

As one means of assessing fidelity I suggest watching for the presence of Art Hanes Sr. or his absence. He was responsible for Bull Connor. If he is absent this can be attributed to the Lane treatment of him in Code Name Toro.

I have Mann crediting Lane will all the original investigative work and describing his good buddy as t e greatest investigator of them all.

I also have the indignant letter Les Payne's boss wrote to New Times, which printed it, and put Mann and NBC further on notice. I think I sent it to NBC.

In all of this, as Shales suggests, there is the commercializing corruption of these great tragedies and the momentous events. Is it the time and the matter over which to seek to address them?

Best,

Howard - your opinions, too, including on the law.